



CITY OF LODI

COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

AGENDA TITLE: Lodi/Southern Pacific Railroad Underpass

MEETING DATE: April 2, 1997

PREPARED BY: Public Works Director

RECOMMENDED ACTION: That the City Council direct staff on how to respond to the San Joaquin County Council of Government's (COG's) policy regarding the Measure K Railroad Crossing Safety Program.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: One year ago, COG adopted a policy (Exhibit A) that calls for project sponsors of six Measure K funded rail crossing safety projects to take one of two positions: confirm the projects by adopting a financing plan or propose alternative projects. Failure to take action would likely result in projects being dropped from the Measure K program. While the policy called for a December 1, 1997 response deadline, it has been extended to spring 1997 to give project sponsors additional time to respond. The City of Lodi is a project sponsor for an underpass at Lodi Avenue and the Southern Pacific Railroad (SPRR) tracks.

Measure K Background

The Measure K program was approved by the voters in November 1990. It funded a variety of transportation projects from a new half cent sales tax. One of the program categories was \$30 million for railroad crossing safety improvements. These improvements consisted of grade separations which would eliminate the at-grade conflict between vehicles and trains by building an overpass or underpass. Although not actually part of the Measure, a list of candidate projects was approved by COG. The list included fourteen locations, one of which was the SPRR/Lodi Avenue crossing, the only location north of the Stockton area.

However, the funding "pot" for these projects was insufficient to cover all these projects and COG developed a funding plan and ranking scheme to provide nearly \$4 million to each of the top eight ranked projects. The ranking scheme included vehicle and train volumes and speeds and delay factors. The Lodi project ranked in the top eight projects. Two of the projects (on Hammer Lane in Stockton) are now under construction. The status of the remaining six projects and the other unfunded projects is shown in Exhibit B. (Note that one location was added after the list was originally ranked.)

Lodi staff worked with Biggs Cardosa Associates, Inc., who were already working on another Measure K project that involved a rail crossing, to prepare background information on the project. The graphics, preliminary cost estimate and construction plans presented later in this report are the result of that work. Environmental review, public hearings and many project details and approvals will need to be accomplished if the project is to go forward.

APPROVED: _____

H. Dixon Flynn -- City Manager

Given the long lead time to develop a grade separation project, the COG and other project sponsors need to take positive steps to proceed on whichever projects are to be completed.

Lodi Avenue/SPRR Issues

Positive factors in pursuing the Lodi Avenue/SPRR underpass include the following:

- Public safety - While train/vehicle accidents have been rare in Lodi, they have occurred and Lodi Avenue was the site of a fatal accident in the 1970's.
- Emergency vehicle access - The closest alternate crossings with grade separations are Turner Road and Kettleman Lane, each one mile away from Lodi Avenue. The adjacent at-grade crossings are close enough that they are usually blocked by rail traffic at the same time as the Lodi Avenue crossing. A grade separation will improve emergency vehicle access in each direction.
- Public convenience - The same alternate crossing choices for emergency vehicles also apply to the general public. Vehicle delays will increase as train frequency increases due to new passenger service and the SP/UP merger.

Negative factors in pursuing the Lodi Avenue/SPRR underpass include the following:

- Street closures and impact to adjacent businesses - As shown in the map in Exhibit C and the accompanying two pages of text, School and Stockton streets would remain open and unaffected. Five to seven businesses would have to be acquired. Some excess property could be resold for reuse after the project. Sacramento and Main streets and the north-south alley west of Sacramento Street would be closed to Lodi Avenue. These closures may have some adverse affect on other businesses in the area.
- Construction disruption - Lodi Avenue at the SP tracks would have to be closed for six months during construction. A possible construction and detour sequence (via Walnut Street) is shown in Exhibit D (two pages). As mentioned, other alternatives, probably more costly, could be designed to minimize Lodi Avenue construction closure.

Other issues include:

- Pedestrian access - While vehicle access to Lodi Avenue at Sacramento and Main streets would be closed, pedestrian access across the tracks could be maintained. This would be done by building a two-level underpass in which the sidewalk is elevated well above the roadway. It would connect to Sacramento and Main streets. With the exception of the ability to cross Lodi Avenue at these locations, pedestrian access along Lodi Avenue would be the same as now and much safer at the tracks.
- Cost - The total project cost is in the \$8 to \$9 million range. This estimate is lower than the earlier Measure K estimate of \$11.3 million. Major variables include the business and right-of-way costs, the value of "resold" land and the need to relocate the CCT tracks. The \$4 million Measure K allocation is obviously insufficient. Up to \$5 million might be available from the State grade separation program; however, more preparatory engineering and environmental work would need to be done to prepare an application. This program is very competitive and funding may not be available for many years.
- Impact on the Central City Revitalization - Potential adverse impact to businesses on the southeast quadrant of the Downtown include loss of Lodi Avenue frontage and Sacramento Street access. These are somewhat balanced by the improvement to Lodi Avenue, improved access to the east side and the architectural design of the underpass structure.

Alternatives

As provided in the COG policy, alternate projects are possible, including:

- A grade separation at another location - Likely alternate locations are Lockeford Street and Harney Lane. (A new crossing, such as Century Boulevard, would not be eligible for State or Measure K funds.) Lockeford Street would have nearly all the same issues as Lodi Avenue and similar costs. It would do less well in competition for funding but is reasonably close enough to Lodi Avenue to provide most of the benefits. Harney Lane would be less expensive; the total cost would be in the \$5 to \$6 million range. Given its location in the growth area of the City, Street Development Impact Mitigation Fee funding might be a possibility.
- At-grade improvements - This could include widening to allow vehicles that must stop at the tracks to pull over and not block traffic, a median to prevent vehicles from cutting around the crossing gates, improved crossing surface and improved gates. Obviously this would be much less expensive and an argument might be made that such improvements could be done at a number of Downtown crossings to be "equivalent" to the grade separation project.

Any alternatives will need to be approved by the COG Board after review by COG's Citizen, Management/Finance and Technical advisory committees.

Public Meeting

A public meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 27, at 7 p.m. in the Library's Community Room to present the above information and obtain public comments. The results of that meeting will be presented at the Council meeting.

FUNDING: None needed at this time.



Jack L. Ronsko
Public Works Director

Prepared by Richard C. Prima, Jr., City Engineer

JLR/RCP/lm

Attachments

cc: Lodi Downtown Business Association
Chamber of Commerce
East Side Improvement Committee

**MEASURE K RAILROAD CROSSING SAFETY PROGRAM
REALLOCATION POLICIES**

The following policies apply to:

March Lane\UPRR	(Stockton)	Lathrop Road\SPRR	(Lathrop)
March Lane\SPRR	(Stockton)	Center St.\SPRR	(Manteca)
Lodi Ave.\SPRR	(Lodi)	Lathrop Road\UPRR	(Lathrop)

The Hammer Lane\UPRR and Hammer Lane\SPRR projects are fully funded and will begin construction this year.

I. Sponsors shall submit Project Support Documentation or a Project Alternative by December 1, 1996.

A. Project Support Documentation shall consist of:

1. Financing Action Plan. A plan explaining how the sponsor intends to finance the local match displayed in the 1996 Strategic Plan and the actions needed to eliminate funding shortfalls.
2. A city council resolution reiterating local support for the existing project and approval of the strategies in the Financing Action Plan.

B. Project Alternative. A sponsor may provide an alternative to their project for COG Board consideration, including:

1. A proposal to reallocate project funds to another grade separation project within the same jurisdiction with Project Support Documentation; or
2. A proposal to "exchange" Railroad Crossing Safety funds with another jurisdiction for funds from another category (for example, congestion relief); or
3. A Financing Action Plan and City Council Resolution for a downscoped project funded with the same Measure K contribution on a percent basis. (For example, Measure K will fund 35% of Lodi's grade crossing project; Lodi could downscope their project to an at-grade safety project, with a 35% Measure K contribution).

II. Reallocation Fund. A "Reallocation Fund" will be created, including money from:

- A. Funds from unsupported projects.
- B. Funds that will not be used for downscoped projects.
- C. Funds remaining after the completion of a project.
- D. Funds left over from trades.
- E. Funds not needed do to receipt of grants, etc.

III. Reallocation Fund Priorities. Will be determined after project sponsors have responded to the new policy requirements.

Changes in project priorities will take into consideration the merger of the Southern Pacific Railroad and Union Pacific Railroad and other relevant issues.

March 1997
Tech., Cit.

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Measure K Railroad Crossing Safety Project
Update

RECOMMENDATION: For Discussion/Action

DISCUSSION:

COG staff would like to discuss how we can help deliver projects in the Measure K Railroad Crossing Safety Program that have fallen behind their delivery schedules due to have funding shortfalls or lost community support and what should be done with the allocation to projects that are undeliverable.

Background. The Measure K Strategic Plan provides an allocation to eight Railroad Crossing Safety Projects (overpasses or underpasses). None of the projects have been delivered to date, but two projects, the Hammer Lane UPRR and SPRR undercrossings in Stockton, will be constructed this summer. There are 7 unfunded "shelf" projects in the Strategic Plan (they are listed on the attached page).

Policies. To help sort out deliverable from undeliverable projects, the COG Board adopted policies in March 1996 requiring the sponsors of the six remaining funded projects to prepare a financing action plan and demonstrate community support for their project or propose an alternative project. The projects were called out because they hadn't made sufficient progress towards meeting their Strategic Plan delivery schedules. Many of the projects appeared stalled due to concerns over large funding shortfalls or an erosion of community support. The due date for compliance was set by the Board at December 1, 1996.

Deliverable\Undeliverable Projects. The projects listed below have met the Board requirements:

SPONSOR

PROJECT

Lathrop

Lathrop Road\Southern Pacific Railroad
(Construct 5 lane overpass, \$6.7 million)

Lathrop	Lathrop Road\Union Pacific Railroad (Construct 4 lane overpass, \$7.1 million)
Stockton	March Lane\Union Pacific Railroad (Six lane underpass, expandable to eight, \$11.4 million)
Stockton	March Lane\Southern Pacific Railroad (Six or eight lane underpass, \$11.4 million)

Two project sponsors have not yet met the policy requirements.

Lodi	Lodi Avenue\Southern Pacific Railroad Crossing (Construct 4 lane underpass, \$11.4 million)
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The City of Lodi will be conducting a public meeting at the end of March to determine community support. Based on the outcome of the meeting, the item will be brought before the Lodi City Council for discussion or action. Their staff has requested an extra month to comply with the policies.

Manteca	Center Street\Southern Pacific Railroad (Construct 4 lane overpass, \$5.6 million)
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Staff at the City of Manteca has indicated they cannot deliver the project due to a funding shortfall, listed in the Strategic Plan at \$1.7 million. Last year, the project was removed from the City's Capital Improvement Program. The project has a \$3.974 million Measure K allocation.

How Should We Proceed? What can we do to help improve the delivery of these projects and how should we proceed with regards to the allocation for an undeliverable project(s)? Should we, for instance:

- o Seek out at-grade safety projects for funding?
- o Increase the funding allocation to funded projects?
- o Reallocate funds to an unfunded project(s)?
- o Do something else?

COG Staff would like to hear your thoughts on this subject.

FISCAL IMPACT None at this time. May eventually result in COG Board reallocation of Measure K Railroad Crossing Safety funds.

Prepared by: Steve VanDenburgh (m:\meask\rrxing\policies.sta)

**UNFUNDED "SHELF" PROJECTS
MEASURE K RAILROAD CROSSING SAFETY PROGRAM**

Strategic
Plan

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Project (Cost)</u>	<u>Sponsor</u>
#9	Tracy Blvd.\SPRR (\$19 mil.)	Tracy
#10	Lower Sac.\UPRR (\$15.9 mil)	County
#11	Jack Tone Rd.\SPRR (\$21.2)* <i>*(Combined w\Interchange Project)</i>	Ripon
#12	Airport Way\SPRR (\$5.3 million)	Manteca
#13	French Camp Rd.\UPRR (\$6.4 mil.)	County
#14	Eleventh St.\SPRR (\$12.7 mil)	Tracy
Unranked	West Lane\SPRR (\$8.5 mil)	County

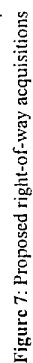


Figure 7: Proposed right-of-way acquisitions

CONSTRUCTION STAGING

Biggs Cardosa Associates recommends that Lodi Avenue be closed during construction to keep down the project cost. Traffic can be detoured from Lodi Avenue to Walnut Avenue by way of Stockton Street and either School or Church Street. The at-grade crossing of the SPTCo. at Walnut Avenue, which has been closed, can be reopened during construction.

The construction would probably proceed along the following steps:

1. The required right-of-way will be purchased.
2. A temporary at-grade crossing of SPTCo. will be constructed at Walnut Avenue.
3. Lodi Avenue traffic will be detoured to Walnut Avenue.
4. Lodi Avenue will be closed between School Street and Stockton Street, with the exception of local access to the Pizza Hut restaurant, the businesses at the southeast corner of School Street and Lodi Avenue (#22, #24 and #26 Lodi Avenue), the Long John Silver restaurant (the vehicular entrance will need to be modified sometime during construction), and the Robinson's Feed company (access through the Goodyear store parcel and/or Main Street).
5. The SPTCo. secondary line will be closed. The SPTCo. main line will be rerouted.
6. Assuming that the two CCTC spur line will need to remain operational after the construction, they will be rerouted to their final configuration. A short-term closure of these tracks may be required.
7. The Underpass structure will be constructed, essentially at grade.
8. The SPTCo. main line will be routed back to its original location, on the structure. The SPTCo. secondary line will be reconstructed on the structure.
9. The rail detour (shoofly) will be removed.
10. The roadway on Lodi Avenue will be excavated to its final configuration. The retaining walls will be constructed.
11. Lodi Avenue will be reconstructed. A pump station will be constructed to drain the depressed roadway section.

12. Lodi Avenue traffic will be moved back to Lodi Avenue. The at-grade crossing at Walnut Avenue will be closed again. The possibility of keeping an at-grade pedestrian crossing of the railroad tracks at Walnut Avenue should be investigated.
13. The roadway work will be finalized, including the construction of the four cul-de-sacs.
14. The excess properties will be repackaged and sold.

In the above scenario, Lodi Avenue will probably have to be closed for about 6 months between School and Stockton Streets. However, we feel that the proposed detour by way of Walnut Avenue would provide an acceptable route during construction and not significantly impact Lodi Avenue thru traffic. Other construction staging sequences may be feasible, and a full PSR would be able to identify various construction sequences and their impacts, for example:

- Lodi Avenue could be detoured around the construction area to a temporary roadway built on the newly acquired parcels.
- The abutments and the center bent could be constructed at existing grade, without the need to reroute Lodi Avenue. Then, Lodi Avenue could be closed for two to three months during which precast or steel girders could be quickly erected on the abutments and bent to complete the structure. The roadway section could then be excavated. Finally, traffic would be allowed back on Lodi Avenue.

RIGHT-OF-WAY REQUIREMENTS

Figure 6 on the next page shows the current parcels and their usage for the area that will be affected by construction. Appendix B contains photographs of the area. The location from which the pictures were taken is also shown on Figure 6.

Figure 7 shows the proposed right-of-way acquisition requirements. A description on a parcel-by-parcel basis is detailed below:

- The businesses at the southeast corner of School Street and Lodi Avenue (Rydel Vacuum, Book Garden and The Comic Grapevine), will not be significantly affected.
- The Pizza Hut restaurant at the northeast corner of School Street and Lodi Avenue will not be significantly affected.
- The Long John Silver restaurant will be somewhat affected, but it is not anticipated that the business will have to be acquired. The vehicular entrance to the restaurant will have to be reconstructed to match the proposed grade for Lodi Avenue and to provide for drive-thru exit. The current drive-thru exit will have to be closed. The traffic patterns within the parking lot will have to be reworked.
- The tune-up shop next to Pizza Hut, on the north side of Lodi Avenue, will have to be acquired. The parcel could then be repackaged to have vehicular access only from the Sacramento Street cul-de-sac and resold. Pedestrian access from Lodi Avenue will be preserved.
- Danigers Furniture, which is located at #4 and #8 Lodi Avenue, will have to be acquired. The parcels could then be repackaged and resold as a single parcel with vehicular access from Sacramento Street only. Pedestrian access from Lodi Avenue will be preserved.
- The used car lot on the north side of Lodi Avenue, between Sacramento Street and the SPTCo. right-of-way will have to be acquired, repackaged to have vehicular access from Sacramento Street only, and resold. Pedestrian access from Lodi Avenue will be preserved. A portion of the parcel will be lost to the cul-de-sac and to the 2:1 slope from the depressed Lodi Avenue sidewalk.
- The structure at #2 Lodi Avenue will have to be condemned. This lot already belongs to the City of Lodi. It may be repackaged and sold as a parcel with vehicular access from Sacramento Street. Pedestrian access from Lodi Avenue will be preserved. A portion of the parcel will be lost to the cul-de-sac and to the 2:1 slope from the depressed Lodi Avenue sidewalk.

- The carpet store on the north side of Lodi Avenue, between Main Street and the SPTCo. right-of-way, will have to be acquired. The parcel could then be repackaged to have vehicular access from Main Street only and resold. Pedestrian access from Lodi Avenue will be preserved. A portion of the parcel will be lost to the cul-de-sac and to the 2:1 slope from the depressed Lodi Avenue sidewalk.
- The car wash on the south side of Lodi Avenue will be affected, but it was assumed that the business will not have to be acquired. The vehicular entrance will have to be moved to Main Street. A portion of the parcel next to Lodi Avenue will have to be acquired to accommodate the 2:1 slope to the sidewalk. If the CCTC line is to remain operational, it will have to be moved, requiring a more extensive easement.
- The empty lot on the south side, at #102 Lodi Avenue, will have to be purchased, repackaged and resold as a parcel with vehicular access from Main Street, and with pedestrian access from Lodi Avenue. An easement will be required for the proposed location of the CCTC spur line.
- The tavern on the south side of Lodi Avenue (#104) will have to be purchased. The parcel could then be repackaged to be part of the parcel at #102 Lodi Avenue and resold.
- If the CCTC line is to remain operational, the front 30 feet of the parking lot and the used car lot at the southwest corner of Lodi Avenue and Stockton Street (#112 and #122 Lodi Avenue) will have to be acquired to provide for the new location of the CCTC spur lines.
- We propose to purchase the Goodyear store at the northwest corner of Lodi Avenue and Stockton Street (#125 Lodi Avenue), subdivide it into two parcels and sell the parcel furthest from the corner. See below for the other parcel.
- The largest business to be affected by this construction is the Robinson's Feed company, at #101 Lodi Avenue. Instead of acquiring it, it may be more cost effective to purchase the Goodyear store (see above), and give half the parcel to the Robinson's Feed company as indemnification for the loss of vehicular access from Lodi Avenue to their present parcel. The Robinson's Feed company could then use this parcel to gain access to both Stockton Street and Lodi Avenue.
- The truck scale on Main Street, next to the Robinson's Feed company, will have to be relocated.

CITY COUNCIL

PHILLIP A. PENNINO, Mayor
JACK A. SIEGLOCK
Mayor Pro Tempore
KEITH LAND
STEPHEN J. MANN
DAVID P. WARNER

CITY OF LODI

CITY HALL, 221 WEST PINE STREET
P.O. BOX 3006
LODI, CALIFORNIA 95241-1910
(209) 333-6706
FAX (209) 333-6710

March 27, 1997

H. DIXON FLYNN
City Manager
JENNIFER M. PERRIN
City Clerk
RANDALL A. HAYS
City Attorney

Mr. Mike Lapenta, President
Lodi Downtown Business Association
12 North School Street
Lodi, CA 95240

Mr. Les Dabritz, Executive Director
Chamber of Commerce
P. O. Box 386
Lodi, CA 95241

Mr. Harry Marzolf, Chairperson
Eastside Improvement Committee
P. O. Box 2444
Lodi, CA 95241

SUBJECT: Lodi/Southern Pacific Railroad Underpass

Enclosed is a copy of background information on an item on the City Council agenda of Wednesday, April 2, 1997, at 7 p.m. The meeting will be held in the City Council Chamber, Carnegie Forum, 305 West Pine Street.

This item is on the regular calendar for Council discussion. You are welcome to attend.

If you wish to write to the City Council, please address your letter to City Council, City of Lodi, P. O. Box 3006, Lodi, California, 95241-1910. Be sure to allow time for the mail. Or, you may hand-deliver the letter to the City Clerk at 221 West Pine Street.

If you wish to address the Council at the Council meeting, be sure to fill out a speaker's card (available at the Carnegie Forum immediately prior to the start of the meeting) and give it to the City Clerk. If you have any questions about communicating with the Council, please contact Jennifer Perrin, City Clerk, at (209) 333-6702.

If you have any questions about the item itself, please call Richard Prima at (209) 333-6706.


for Jack L. Ronsko
Public Works Director

JLR/lm

Enclosure

cc: City Clerk